Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*

Editorial Office 1323 M STREET, WASHINGTON 5, D.C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066

VOL. III, NO. 44, *Issue Number* 144, OCTOBER 30, 1946 ★ *Editors:* FELIX MORLEY & FRANK C. HANIGHEN

THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER

By Felix Morley

With little aid from press or pulpit in clarification of underlying issues, the American people have now in their collective mind decided the composition of the Eightieth Congress.

One characteristic of that legislative body is determined in advance of its election. The new Congress will represent the quality of our political thinking as a Nation. If both the major candidates in any particular constituency seem unworthy, that is due to public apathy when they were chosen. If the better man is defeated in any of the contests on November 5, that outcome also will be the decision of the voters, and the decision of those who could but do not vote.

Interest centers on the performance of the Opposition Party. It is 14 years since the Republicans lost executive power; 15 years since legislative control was taken from them. During these years, also, a long series of New Deal appointments has brought a pronounced shift in Constitutional interpretation by the Judiciary. Governmental powers have been greatly increased and centralized. The unitary State has been exalted at the expense of its subdivisions and to the cost of the individual. One may summarize by saying that if the Republican Party could at this election obtain control of all 48 State governments this would have little effect on the operations of a New Deal President, Congress and Supreme Court.

Since 1932 there has been a revolutionary change in the practice of American Government. The adoption of State Socialism is not less significant because it has come without violence and because care has been taken to obscure the change. Even before the war, President Roosevelt had moved very far in developing the powers and functions of a Welfare State. Wartime centralization confirmed this trend. It is now so well established as to seem wholly natural to every voter under the age of 30, to say nothing of the millions who are on the Federal payroll or who in one way or another are the recipients of governmental largesse.

If President Roosevelt had lived it is quite possible that by this time the United States would have been changed irrevocably into a single

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unitary Socialist State. That was the direction of his leadership, and the majority of the American people were willing to follow. But one difficulty with what the Germans call the Fuehrer Prinzip is its inability to solve the problem of succession. As prospective Vice President, in 1944, Mr. Truman was more helpful to his party than he is as President, in 1946.

This fact, coupled with the inevitable post-war reaction and the emergence of many problems which were not "planned that way," has gone far to disintegrate a party which frankly acclaimed one "indispensable man" and therefore can scarcely expect to survive his loss unscathed.

II

The major importance of the coming election, however, is not found in the possibility that the GOP may thereby come into control of both Houses of Congress and put a stop to the growth of administrative absolutism. If the Republicans had been in office for 14 years it might well be equally desirable that they should be ousted.

The two-party system is not a mere political convenience. It roots in the different values men attach on the one hand to free social action, undertaken voluntarily, and on the other to coercive governmental action, applied with the backing of police power. The individualist believes in the former, the collectivist in the latter, procedure. Indeed, it is a reasonable over-simplification to say that the individualist centers his thought on the divine in man; the collectivist on man's inheritance of original sin.

Social organization antedates the State, as we know from its development among primitive peoples who have never established political government. The State, nevertheless, grew from social organization, especially from the need of keeping peace between and for social groups. Admitting this to be necessary, should the State be allowed to absorb Society, or should it be controlled by Society?

Ever since the dawn of political thought, in Greece some 2500 years ago, men have divided on the question of the desirable limits to State power. Those, like Socrates, who put individual liberty before collective authority will oppose, if necessary with their lives, the extension of governmental functions. Those, like Plato, who conclude that the individual must be made to conform will inevitably be led to advocacy of the Welfare State, illogically trusting that its rulers may be better men then those they rule. Whenever and wherever there has been freedom of expression the issue of whether the State should control Society, or Society the State, has been vivid and often bloody. As Thomas Hobbes picturesquely put it, in 1651:

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"Beset with those that contend on one side for too great liberty, and on the other side for too much authority, 'tis hard to pass between the points of both unwounded."

III

Perhaps the greatest political achievement of the English people was their early recognition of this psychological difference between the advocates of liberty and those of authority, and their action to make political divisions correspond with this cleavage in thinking.

The Tory and Whig parties in England actually evolved from argument over the relative authority to be accorded Crown and Parliament, but behind this was the issue of whether the State should control Society, or Society the State. Our own political parties adapted the English division, with Hamilton advocating authority and Jefferson liberty. From then on the issue has divided our citizens, and still does.

While English and American political parties continue to reflect fundamental psychological divisions, alignments have shifted as a result of social changes and political opportunism. Thus the English Liberals at first opposed a royal authority which the Conservatives favored. As the prerogative of the King ceased to be a vital matter, and as the Industrial Revolution transformed English Society, the former Tories moved over to support "free enterprise." Against them the Labour Party soon rose in strength. But the two-party system was preserved by disintegration of the Liberal Party, some of its members moving to Labour, some to the Conservative camp.

In our own country, the Republican Party has moved from indorsing to opposing centralized government while the Democratic Party, long the advocate of State's Rights, has in late years all but destroyed the Federal structure in order to build an omnipotent central government. Of course spokesmen of this party tend to emphasize the desirability of providing security for the individual and do not threaten him with disciplinary action. One must be very naive, however, to think that any government can provide more than a minimum of security without first establishing extended and continuous authority.

The fact that party authority must be continuous, in order even to attempt to provide a large degree of security, explains why the Communists, the Fascists and the Nazis alike would brook no opposition. Any party dedicated to building an authoritarian Welfare State will sooner or later be forced to argue, with sincerity, that it cannot tolerate "reactionary" criticism. In Europe the rise of the single dictatorial party was relatively easy because the two-party system was never established there. In the German Reichstag, just before the Nazis took over,

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there were more than 20 separate "splinter" parties, making it easy for the fanatical leadership which moved to destroy them all.

Only the English-speaking peoples have had the political skill to maintain the two-party system, in which the opposition is cohesive and is always ready to take over the conduct of government, on the basis of its own philosophy, whenever the electorate gives it mandate to do so.

IV

Seen against this background, our Congressional election, next week, assumes world-wide and historic importance. The fundamental issue is not whether a Republican majority will replace a Democratic majority in Congress. It is, rather, whether totalitarian philosophy has made such strides, throughout the world, that it cannot be reversed.

No prejudice is revealed in defining the coming test in those stark terms. Whatever the virtues of Democratic leadership, it is clear that this party now stands, on its record, for ever-increasing State authority. Whatever the Republican deficiencies, it will be agreed that this party is in general opposed to State Socialism. There have been times, and they may return, when Society has been improved by the imposition of State controls. But everywhere the need of post-war Society is freedom to rebuild.

Hitler was all too justified in saying that though he died, yet his ideas would conquer. It is only in the English-speaking countries that some form of National Socialism, red, black, brown or pink, is not now in the ascendant. England itself, for all its service to the liberal tradition, has moved far toward Statism under war pressures. In this country alone, where political theory places Man above the State, is there visible any concerted defense of real Liberalism, so well expressed in Lord Acton's declaration that "Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end."

On November 5, some voters may swing to the Opposition primarily because under our brand of National Socialism they could not buy meat. But the significant protest will come from those who despise our crabwise march toward totalitarianism; who realize how much of Nazi philosophy we have been forced to adopt in the last 14 years; who intend to preserve earth's last stronghold of freedom as the land of liberty it was designed to be.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. III, NO. 44

By Frank C. Hanighen October 30, 1946

Most observers expect the Republicans to win a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives in the elections on November 5. They look first for gains in the Congressional districts which were close in 1944. In that year, about 90 House seats, Democratic and Republican, were decided by majorities of 5 per cent of the total vote, or less. Thus, if there should occur a switch of 5 voters out of every 100 in these districts the incumbents would suffer defeat. These marginal seats are scattered throughout the country, but their numbers in the most important states are as follows: New York -- 5; Illinois -- 4; California -- 4; Pennsylvania -- 8; Ohio -- 5; Missouri -- 6; Connecticut -- 5.

Interest will focus not only on these states but on the close districts in them. The Republicans are not greatly worried about their incumbents, in view of the expected Republican trend. For the convenience of readers who intend to listen to radio reports of the elections, we have listed below the names of districts (and the candidates) narrowly held by Democrats. If the trend is real, listeners can early in the evening measure its strength by watching for announcements of results from the following districts.

New York. 4th District (Queens). Mrs. William B. Barry, Democrat; Gregory McMahon, Republican; George H. Rooney, American Labor.

13th District (Brooklyn). Donald L. O'Toole, Democrat, American Labor; Charles H. Weadon, Republican.

26th District (Bronx). Peter A. Quinn, Democrat; David Potts, Republican; Gerald O'Reilly, American Labor.

40th District (Rochester). George F. Rogers, Democrat, American Labor; Kenneth B. Keating, Republican.

Also worth watching are the 18th District, where Congressman Marcantonio's (American Labor, Democrat) fortunes will indicate strength or weakness of the fellow traveller vote; and the 22nd (Harlem) District where the fidelity of the Negro vote (now represented by Congressman Adam C. Powell) to the Democrats will be tested by Grant Reynolds, Republican. It is also reported that the Buffalo area is moving into the Republican column, which if true will be significant, since that is the home town of Democratic Gubernatorial candidate James M. Mead.

Pennsylvania. Republicans claim most of the 6 Philadelphia Congressional districts, all held by Democrats. The following are considered most likely to fall.

1st District. William A. Barrett, Democrat; James Gallagher, Republican.

3rd District. Albert S. Townsend, Democrat; Hardie Scott, Republican.

5th District. William J. Green, Jr., Democrat; George W. Sarbacher, Jr., Republican.

6th District. Herbert J. McGlinchey, Democrat; Hugh D. Scott, Jr., Republican.

If these are reported going Republican, then look for the following districts up-state (strongly claimed by Republicans) to follow suit:

11th District (Wilkes-Barre). Daniel J. Flood, Democrat; Mitchell Jenkins, Republican.

23rd District (Uniontown). John W. Rankin, Democrat; William J. Crow, Republican.

Illinois. In Cook County (Chicago), Democrats now hold 9 Congressional seats, Republicans 1. The latter are confident of gains, with their best hopes in the following:

2nd District. William A. Rowan, Democrat; Richard B. Vail, Republican.

3rd District. Edward A. Kelly, Democrat; Fred E. Busbey, Republican.

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7th District. William W. Link, Democrat; Thomas L. Owens, Republican.

9th District. Alexander J. Resa, Democrat; Robert J. Twyman, Republican.

If these are reported swinging to the Republicans, then down-state Democratic seats are in grave danger, as well as the Democratic candidate-at-large, Emily Taft Douglas, pitted against William G. Stratton, Republican.

Connecticut usually reports early and is considered a significant state. Republican victories there may herald a nation-wide trend. Watch for results in the 1st District where Democratic Congressman Herman P. Koppleman is opposed by Republican William J. Miller. Also watch Maryland, which because of good candidates has been considered the most strongly Democratic of the border states this year. If Republicans are reported breaching this stronghold, then look for the much publicized trend in other border states, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma.

The above districts have been selected because they are key districts and may be reported early. There are many other districts which assume significance -- such as the 2nd in West Virginia, where Democratic Congressman Jennings Randolph is reportedly hard pressed by Republican Melvin C. Snyder; the two Cleveland and three Detroit districts, the often enigmatic state of California, etc.

Close Senatorial contests are expected in the following states: New York, Massachusetts, Washington, Montana, New Mexico, West Virginia -- all now held by Democrats. Nevada and Arizona are deemed "probably safe" for Democrats; if they should show surprising Republican strength, watch out for other mountain states -- Wyoming, New Mexico, Idaho, Montana, where there are lively Senatorial fights.

Listeners should disregard the two short-term Senatorial contests, in Connecticut and Ohio, for the term beginning November 6, 1946 and ending January 3, 1947. Except in the unlikely event that Truman should summon Congress into special session before the first of the year, these short-term elections have little importance.

One result is certain: the character of the 80th Congress, to be elected on November 5, will be conservative. On most important measures, almost all of the Southern Democrats will find themselves in agreement with the majority of the Republicans across the floor. And there may even be some Northern conservative Democratic members. A case in point is the 4th Connecticut. There, the Democratic candidate is Col. Henry C. Mucci, war hero, who makes speeches praising General MacArthur, regarded as a Republican possibility in 1948. Mucci is considered more "Right-wing" than his Republican opponent John Davis Lodge. The PAC is not backing Mucci. It would not be surprising if some Northern Democratic Members of Congress, formerly Rooseveltian, turned Jeffersonian.

* * * * *

John L. Lewis' bid for renegotiation of the miners' contract with the Government has been interpreted widely as a "political" maneuver, to help defeat the Democratic Party in the elections. True, Lewis was Republican in the last two Presidential elections and his move puts the Administration on the spot. Miners' votes are important factors in a number of states. But it is believed that the UMW chief in taking this step was prompted by trade union rather than by political reasons.

It is noted that the unexpected request for negotiation came just as the prospect of another wave of strikes and wage disputes appeared on the horizon. It is expected that these troubles will commence after the first of the year, if not sooner. The CIO is already talking of new wage demands, to be justified by the rising cost of living. In January there will assemble a new and more conservative Congress. The leader of the United Mine Workers, therefore, saw that it was to his advantage to take time by the forelock.

There are also reasons arising from conditions in the coal industry. The mines have been working 54 hours a week and turning out a lot of coal. The present coal reserves are estimated at six weeks' supply. By February, there may be two to three months' supply -- a valuable bargaining instrument in the hands of the operators or

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the Government. Additionally, some circles believe that Lewis wants a new expiration date for his contracts. The date for many years has been April 1, not the most advantageous bargaining time for the miners. November or December would be better expiration dates, and Lewis may have this in mind.

* * * * *

American Army circles greet with some reserve Stalin's statement that Russia has only 60 divisions in Europe. They note that Stalin specifies this number of divisions as "rifle and armored." This would exclude all horse cavalry, artillery (the Russian Army is peculiar in having artillery divisions) and air units -- all of which might reach a rather large figure. The Russian division is small, practically what we would call a brigade, boasting about 7,000 men. Thus, according to Stalin, Russia has only about 500,000 men in Europe. But the figure does not correspond with American Army estimates, which support Churchill's claim that Russia has 200 divisions, or at least 1,400,000 men in Europe. Perhaps Stalin's main intent in the statement is seen in the Daily Worker headline (October 29), "Stalin Nails Churchill as No. 1 Warmonger." That has been the "line" for many months.

* * * * *

The sharp attack on "the Fascist control of Spain," made by Secretary-General Trygve Lie (in his supplementary report to the General Assembly of UN), has implications which far exceed the question of Franco's merits or demerits.

Under the League of Nations the Secretary-General was an administrative, not a policy-making, official. Sir Eric Drummond, the British civil servant who headed the League Secretariat during its formative years, would never have attacked the government of any nation, Member or non-Member of the League. Had he done so, the Council would properly have called him down.

As HUMAN EVENTS pointed out (July 4, 1945), the United Nations has a different setup. Under Article 99 of the Charter: "The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion [underscore supplied] may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."

Mr. Lie is proceeding to demonstrate the explosive power of this Article. "In his opinion" Spain is a threat to peace. But in the opinion of another Secretary-General Yugoslavia might be held a threat to peace, and Tito as much a dictator as Franco. Trouble lies ahead for the UN if the "opinion" of its chief administrative officer is to rule in determining policy towards this or that government. [F.M.]

Serious observers, like Mr. Edwin L. James of the New York Times, believe that the current UN Assembly will prove to be more than an academic debating society, that the line-up in its votes may exert no little influence on the decisions in the more important Four Power Foreign Ministers Conference which starts in New York on November 4. The votes in the Paris Conference often went 15 to 6 against the Russians; in the much larger Assembly, it is suggested, our intransigent friends may find themselves at the short end of a 45 to 6 poll. The Big Four could not entirely overlook such a majority.

One thing especially interests diplomats: the important matter of the quality of delegation staffs at the meetings in New York. Observers bring back the encouraging news that the American staff at Paris was of excellent quality -- indeed one of the best at the Conference. Much of our diplomatic footwork at Paris, to which adequate tribute has not been paid, was due to our well-informed and well-trained technical advisers. Not as much could be said for the British delegation, which appeared under-staffed and far from brilliant. Other delegations had staff difficulties. Thus, the Ethiopian delegation arrived in Paris without adequate staff and filled the gap by hiring Western Europeans. The latters' pigmentation led wits to dub them the "Byelo-Ethiopians."

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Notes and Quotes

With a title, "The World's Santa Claus," which is not intentionally ironic, an editorial in the Eastern Economist (New Delhi, India, July 12) offers America advice, the irony of which may not appeal to some Americans. Arguing that the United States can never balance imports and exports because the former "might reduce employment within and create unemployment," the editorial concludes, "In such circumstances it would be not such a foolish thing (as some might imagine) to give away goods to other countries, for on balance it would be better to part with surplus goods than to create unemployment."

Such ideas have been current in New Deal circles for some time. But the Eastern Economist is the first foreign voice to state them so handsomely and frankly. "What is essential is to devise a peacetime machinery on a semi-permanent basis . . . of an orderly scheme of transfer of goods and equipment from America to the rest of the world. . . .

"We suggest that from now onwards . . . a machinery should be set up by America whose purpose would be to provide gifts of loans to countries . . . if President Roosevelt's famous Freedom from Want is not to be a pious wish and a slogan empty of content, it should be the duty of America to organize systematically the outflow of goods to the poorer countries . . .

"It should also be made a condition that the proceeds of these gifts would not be used to benefit any private capitalist in any country. . . . If this is to play the world's Santa Claus, the United States of America is both rich enough and should have the sense enough to fill the role."

* * * * *

Sagittarius, a political satirist of no mean skill, writing in the London New Statesman and Nation (October 19), expresses a popular fatigue and apathy. The crowds who did not wax enthusiastic over the UN parade in New York last week drew diplomatic reproval from Paul-Henri Spaak, President of the UN Assembly. Sagittarius' wit probes deeper in these verses titled "'Tis a Pity 'Tis a Bore":

When Smuts and Churchill speak of democracy's mystique
And once again with mankind's conscience plead,
When Stalin on the air through the iron portière
Asseverates the Marxist's moral lead,
When they ask a change of heart and propose another start
To dissipate the haunting fear of war,
Their solemn admonition is staled by repetition --
The common man has heard it all before.

. . .

We citizens await our not uncertain fate
While delegations meet to pick a bone,
While elder statesmen show the way mankind should go
With majestic and admonitory tone.
The atom- or bacillus-bomb eventually may kill us
Before world equilibrium is restored --
We ought to show our gratitude for every stirring platitude,
But we, who are about to die, are bored.

* * * * *

We have been concerned for some time as to the exact definition of the word "reactionary." The best we have seen comes from Winston Churchill whose Left-Wing critics hurl this epithet at him. Speaking in the House of Commons, he said: "An armed Communist advances upon you and you react against him. Therefore, you are a reactionary." (New York Times, October 24)

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